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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Letter dated 5 August 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Vanuatu to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the seven South Pacific Forum countries that are also Members of the United Nations, namely, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, I have the honour to request that the attached document, the final communiqué of the twenty-second South Pacific Forum, held at Palikir, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, on 29 and 30 July 1991 (see annex), be circulated as an official document of the General

Assembly under items 4, 15 (a), 19, 20, 36, 37, 43, 44, 46, 51, 59, 60 (i), 69, 70, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 89, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98 and 104 of the provisional agenda. 1/

(Signed) Robert F. VAN LIEROP
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

TWENTY-SECOND SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM
Palikir, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia
29 - 30 July 1991

FORUM COMMUNIQUE

The Twenty-Second South Pacific Forum was held in Palikir, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia from 29 to 30 July 1991, and was attended by Heads of Government of the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu and Western Samoa. Australia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Republic of the Marshall Islands by its Minister for Health, Solomon Islands by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tonga by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence and Vanuatu by its Deputy Prime Minister.

2. The Forum discussed the following key issues:

- Economic development and trade prospects for the region;
- Environmental matters including the UN Conference on Environment and Development;
- The importance of ongoing discussions on regional security;
- Developments in New Caledonia; and
- The region's approach to global issues.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3. The Forum expressed concern at the continuing difficult economic situation facing many member governments. It endorsed the view that while many issues, such as programmes of economic structural adjustment, needed action at the national level, there was also a key role for regional action. The Forum noted that while the delivery of substantial aid flows remained of critical

importance to Forum Island Countries, there was a need for greater emphasis to be given to issues involving the private sector including trade and investment.

4. The Forum recognised the importance of continuing high level economic discussions between Forum Island Countries and the region's major development partners. It was pleased to note the firm resolve shown by all those interested in South Pacific development to foster greater levels of cooperation, coordination and policy dialogue. In this regard a number of important issues were identified for further development of policies and programmes. These included the role of the private sector, recurrent cost issues of aid delivery, progress in the development of strategic planning and policy formulation capacities, human resources development including higher education and training and refinement of aid consultative mechanisms. It was fundamental that all agencies involved in these activities in the region continued to work closely together, coordinating their efforts to the greatest extent possible. The Forum particularly emphasised the role of the South Pacific Organisations Coordinating Committee in this regard.

5. The Forum was particularly concerned about duplication of activities between regional programmes and organisations. It therefore welcomed the proposal that the Forum Secretariat work with other regional organisations and donors to develop a statement of priority programme needs for the region that could be met through collaborative regional assistance programmes, complementing national activities.

6. The Forum agreed that the region should continue to promote links with the rest of the world including non-Forum territories in the Pacific and that links should continue to be strengthened with groupings such as APEC and PECC and that the relationship between the Secretariat and the ASEAN Secretariat continue to be fostered. The Forum joined others in the international community in urging all participants in the Uruguay Round to commit themselves to a comprehensive and successful end to the negotiations this year and underlined the importance of fair trading systems to Forum member countries.

7. The Forum also confirmed that the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands continue his discussions with the United States authorities regarding funding and the structure of the proposed Joint Commercial Commission (JCC) between Forum Island Countries and the United States to be initially located at the East West Center in Hawaii. It also accepted that the JCC would be initially

composed of the United States and the thirteen Forum Island Countries as proposed by the United States but wished the opportunity to remain for other Pacific Island Governments to become members of the Commission in future. Forum members agreed that upon the establishment of the JCC, Mr Jioji Kotobalavu would be appointed as their Executive Secretary.

ENERGY

8. Given the importance of the energy sector, the Forum welcomed the offer of Fiji to host a meeting of Forum Energy Ministers on 29-30 August 1991 to consider oil pricing policies as they affected economic development in Forum Island Countries. It further endorsed the need for the Secretariat to continue to monitor and analyse international oil prices and the cost structure of oil companies in reaching the prices of oil products charged in Forum Island Countries.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

9. The Forum supported efforts to develop a more regional approach to consumer protection matters. In this context it welcomed the holding of a further regional Seminar on Consumer Protection in Western Samoa later this year. All member governments undertook to examine closely the United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection.

SMALLER ISLAND STATES

10. The Forum recognised the special development requirements of the Smaller Island States of the Forum and recommended that the international donor community take these into account when providing assistance to those Forum members. The Forum welcomed the offer by the Cook Islands Government to host a meeting in November 1991 of Heads of Government of the Smaller Island States together with senior officials and private-sector representatives to consider the longer term strategies for the development of the Smaller Island States. The Forum Secretariat would facilitate this meeting drawing on funding to be made available by Australia under a new programme to foster the development of the private sector in the South Pacific.

ENVIRONMENT

11. The Forum reaffirmed the fundamental importance to the region of environmental issues and acknowledged the critical linkages between the protection and conservation of the environment and sustainable economic development. It stressed the need to articulate Pacific interests clearly and comprehensively in the negotiation of international conventions on climate change and biodiversity as well as in other environmental forums. The Forum also reaffirmed the obligation of all countries to cooperate to conserve and protect the environment and to promote appropriate and sustainable development policies in order that the well-being of future generations could be assured.

12. It welcomed progress on decisions made the previous year on the need for strong institutional arrangements to address these concerns with the marked strengthening of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) into a fully autonomous regional organisation and the decision to establish SPREP's Headquarters in Western Samoa.

13. The Forum welcomed the entry into force of the Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (SPREP Convention) and its associated Protocols concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution Emergencies in the South Pacific Region and the Prevention of Pollution of the South Pacific Region by Dumping. It also welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention).

14. The June 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) would be of critical importance to the future of the region. The importance of the regional preparation for UNCED and its preparatory meetings was firmly underlined by the Forum. The Forum expressed its full support for the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development issued by Ministers and representatives at the 8-9 July SPREP Intergovernmental Meeting. The Forum also noted the South Pacific regional statement to be presented at the third meeting of the UNCED Preparatory Committee in August 1991. It agreed that the Forum's support for the Declaration be conveyed to all relevant international bodies with the aim of ensuring that full account was taken of South Pacific concerns. For the peoples of the Pacific, the sea was a most important part of their environment and in this

regard the Forum urged those member states who had yet to ratify the Law of the Sea Convention to do so.

15. The Forum agreed that its members be collectively represented, at ministerial level where possible, with coordination and support from SPREP, at the Preparatory Committees leading up to the Conference as these will take many of the key decisions. The third and fourth Preparatory Committees were of particular importance in this regard. At the UNCED Conference itself, participation at the highest possible political level would be desirable to focus attention on the region's interest. Given the complexity and size of the UNCED process the Forum considered that issues could be usefully engaged in concert with other like-minded countries, especially members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Consideration should be given to a coordinated strategy whereby Forum representatives might "specialise" as spokesperson for the region on specific issues. Support from SPREP would be vital. The Forum urged international support to facilitate the effective participation of the Forum Island Countries at the Preparatory Committees and the UNCED itself.

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

16. Global warming and sea level rise were the most serious environmental threats to the Pacific region. The cultural, economic and physical survival of Pacific nations was at great risk.

17. The Forum confirmed the importance for all members of the international community to develop a Framework Convention on Climate Change. In this regard it applauded the efforts of AOSIS. It stressed the urgency of securing international action through the timely conclusion of a strong and substantive global convention with commitments to control the adverse effects of climate change by, inter alia, significant and immediate reductions in emissions of industrially generated greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide. The Forum noted the primary responsibility of industrial countries for reducing these emissions. The Forum noted that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on a Framework Convention on Climate Change (INC/FCCC) had acknowledged the need to accommodate the special interests and needs of Small Island States. It stressed the need to identify those needs and interests clearly and comprehensively, and to communicate them to the INC prior to its third negotiating session in September 1991. It recognised the importance of SPREP playing a central technical and coordinating role.

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18. The Forum recognised that progress towards the stabilisation of greenhouse gas emissions was directly linked to commitments to achieve greater energy efficiency and to develop appropriate alternative energy sources and technologies. It called upon all countries, but particularly developed countries, to give high priority to continuing research, development and transfer of technologies in these areas. The Forum agreed to communicate these concerns to the INC and to all other relevant international bodies.

Nuclear Testing

19. The Forum remained concerned that despite long standing opposition by the Forum, France continued to carry out nuclear testing in the region. It noted that this was despite France's welcome decision to become a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its signature and ratification of the SPREP Convention and its Protocols. The Forum expressed its deep dismay that the French Government had formally stated that its nuclear testing programme in the South Pacific would not be affected by the decision to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Forum reiterated its firm and unceasing opposition to nuclear testing in the region. In this regard the Forum agreed to give consideration to an expanded programme of opposition to France's nuclear testing in the region. It suggested that SPREP play a central role in monitoring and evaluating the environmental impact of nuclear testing in the region.

Dumping of Toxic and Hazardous Waste

20. Concern was expressed about the potential for the region to become a dumping ground for toxic and hazardous waste and chemicals and radioactive materials. In this regard, the Forum commended the London Dumping Convention (LDC) for its recent progressive stance on ocean dumping, and in particular for its 1990 decision to phase out industrial waste dumping at sea. The Forum expressed support for Forum Island Country members who were seeking to codify these advances by amendment of the LDC. The Forum noted its desire to culminate this procedure at the Fifteenth Consultative Meeting of the LDC in 1992 coincident with the UNCED Conference.

Driftnet Fishing

21. The Forum reaffirmed its commitment to the Tarawa Declaration which, inter alia, committed members of the Forum to the cessation of driftnet fishing

within their waters and to actively contribute to international efforts to prohibit the practice. In this regard the Forum welcomed the entry into force on 17 May 1991 of the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific and reaffirmed its call for all eligible countries to accede to the Convention and its Protocols, as appropriate.

22. The Forum also reiterated that Resolutions 44/225 and 45/197, in which the United Nations mandated the complete cessation of driftnet fishing in the South Pacific region by 1 July 1991 and the imposition of moratoria in all regions of the world on all large scale driftnet fishing on the high seas by 30 June 1992, should be fully implemented. The Forum called for continued vigilance and cooperation by Forum members and other like-minded states during consideration of this issue at the United Nations General Assembly and noted that in compliance with Resolutions 45/197, Forum members in consultation with the Forum Fisheries Agency would be submitting a report on the impact of driftnet fishing to the Secretary General.

Biodiversity

23. The Forum noted that the Pacific region was one of the world's centres of biological diversity. The many thousands of islands had a rich complex of terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The maintenance of the region's biological diversity was critically important to ecologically sustainable development throughout the region and the world. The Forum recognised the fundamental importance of their biological resources to the people of the Pacific region and endorsed the development of agricultural, forestry, mining and fishing practices which encouraged the maintenance of Pacific biological diversity.

JACADS

24. The Forum considered the Report of the Ministerial Mission on JACADS. Subsequently the United States had, at the request of Solomon Islands Government, removed World War II chemical munitions to Johnston Atoll. The Forum again recorded Pacific opposition to JACADS and reaffirmed the fundamental importance of advice and consent of Pacific governments in any future actions by any state that could impact upon the health and well-being of Pacific people. A Forum scientific mission to monitor the progress and safety of JACADS would be undertaken in the near future and would report its findings to all member governments.

25. The Forum welcomed and accepted as binding US assurances that it would cease the operation of JACADS and dismantle the facility following the destruction of chemical weapons now on Johnston Atoll (and any further stocks discovered in the Forum region). The Forum expressed its appreciation of US efforts to keep Forum Governments informed on the operations of the JACADS facility and looked forward to continuing dialogue with the US on this matter. The Forum urged the US to bring Johnston Atoll under the SPREP Convention regime.

REGIONAL SECURITY

26. The Forum stressed that, in a rapidly changing global political and economic scene, exchange of information and dialogue amongst member governments was increasingly important. It also concluded that there was further scope for effective regional cooperation in the law enforcement field. Recent work had revealed that this was a complex area and that individual countries had different priorities. The Forum Regional Security Committee was directed to consider priorities and resource needs when Forum Governments had completed national assessments.

27. The Forum expressed its continuing concern over the grave social consequences of drug abuse and the illegal traffic in narcotic drugs. Forum Governments renewed their commitment to cooperate in combating drug abuse and drug trafficking. In this connection it expressed support for proposals to increase the resources available to regional organisations combating drug abuse and drug trafficking. It also expressed support for various proposals to help develop the capacity of small island countries to successfully address law enforcement problems associated with drug abuse, drug trafficking and other related issues.

DECOLONISATION

28. The Forum once again reaffirmed the importance of the universal realisation of the right of peoples to self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and the principles and practices of the United Nations pertaining thereto. In this connection, the Forum noted that the United Nations had now embarked on the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and renewed its request that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, or a specially designated representative of the Secretary-General, visit

each of the territories which remained on the United Nations list of non self-governing territories. The Forum also renewed its proposal that an extensive study of the remaining non self-governing territories be undertaken by the United Nations and the results widely distributed, and that countries be requested to consider adopting national legislation to promote and safeguard the human rights of peoples living under colonialism.

Western Sahara

29. The Forum expressed satisfaction with the recent progress made toward achieving a just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara. In this connection Forum Governments congratulated the POLISARIO Front and the Kingdom of Morocco on this achievement, and commended the role played by the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations in contributing to a suitable solution consistent with the principles and practices of the United Nations.

New Caledonia

30. The Forum once again drew attention to the close links which existed between the people of New Caledonia, particularly the indigenous Kanaks, and other peoples of the South Pacific, and acknowledged the constructive actions being taken by all involved to facilitate the further development of those links.

31. The Forum noted the positive measures being pursued in New Caledonia by the French authorities, in cooperation with all sectors of the population, to promote equitable political, economic and social development in the territory, in order to provide a framework for its peaceful evolution to self-determination.

32. The Forum stressed the great importance of equitable economic and social development, transparency in the preparation of the electoral rolls, and continued dialogue among all the parties involved in New Caledonia in preparation for an act of self-determination, consistent with the principles and practices of the United Nations, in which all options, including independence, were open, and which would safeguard the rights of the indigenous Kanaks and those of all other New Caledonians.

33. Forum Governments again expressed the hope that the French authorities, and others, would expand their assistance for education and training

opportunities for the Kanak population, in order to enable all New Caledonians to exercise their right of self-determination under the best possible conditions. They reiterated their hope that the French authorities would facilitate regular visits to New Caledonia by visiting missions of the United Nations.

34. The Forum would continue its active and vigilant observation of developments in New Caledonia. It congratulated the Ministerial Committee established by the 21st Forum on its very useful interim report. The Forum directed that the final report be widely distributed, including at the United Nations, and asked the Committee to continue its work. The Forum expressed the hope that the French authorities would continue to facilitate visits to New Caledonia by representatives, including Heads of Government of Forum countries.

35. The Forum's intention was to promote increasing contacts with New Caledonia, including by invitations, on a case-by-case basis as appropriate, to French Pacific territories to participate in Forum advisory committees, seminars and workshops. The Forum also acknowledged the usefulness of cultural events where through invitation to the various ethnic groups in New Caledonia, informal contacts with them could be promoted. Informal contacts with political groups within New Caledonia during the annual Forum meeting should be continued. It expressed the hope that other groups would take advantage of this opportunity.

36. The Forum offered to assist the FLNKS in developing a programme of action for ensuring their objectives were met through the Matignon Accords. It further agreed to the establishment of a fund to assist with the training of Kanaks within and outside the region to be administered by the Secretariat.

South Africa

37. The Forum reviewed the situation in South Africa and noted the positive measures taken over the past year to dismantle institutionalised apartheid. Forum Governments called upon those who currently governed South Africa to take the further steps necessary to accelerate the process of totalling dismantling apartheid, and its various vestiges and effects. The Forum noted with dismay the revelation of South African Government involvement in covert political destabilisation and called upon it to take such steps as were necessary to restore its credibility and set the course of negotiations back on a proper path. The Forum, while accepting the appropriateness of a phased relaxation of sanctions as

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major progress was made in dismantling apartheid, believed that some form of external discipline should be maintained upon the South African Government until a fully democratic political and social system was achieved.

PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

38. The Forum unanimously reaffirmed its endorsement of the candidacy of the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Rt Hon Sir Michael Somare, for the position of President of the 46th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Given the significant changes taking place around the world, it also strongly supported the theme of "Managing Change" proposed by Sir Michael as an important issue to be pursued at the United Nations.

SECURITY OF SMALL STATES

39. The Forum welcomed the liberation of Kuwait from foreign occupation and urged the international community to consider effective peaceful measures to assure the security and territorial integrity of all militarily or economically vulnerable smaller states. In this connection, Forum Governments urged all members of the world community to work together for the effective implementation of all United Nations resolutions on this subject, as well as the progressive development of, and respect for, international law.

FORUM COUNTRY INITIATIVES

40. Heads of Government pledged their support and commended:

- Applications of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia to join the United Nations as full members. The Forum called upon the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations to welcome unanimously, these applications for membership in the United Nations.

- The candidacy of New Zealand for the United Nations Security Council for a two year term in 1993-94. Members also recalled their pledges of support for Japan's candidacy.

- Application of Nauru for membership of the Asian Development Bank.

- The proposal for the convening of a Pacific Summit for Children and requested that the Secretary General discuss this proposal with his colleague, the Secretary General of the South Pacific Commission and submit a report to the 23rd South Pacific Forum.

- The Forum received the report of the Rarotonga Workshop on the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

- The 40th Anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

- Both South Korea and North Korea in their respective bids for membership of the United Nations. . .

TOURISM

41. The Forum acknowledged the importance of tourism to the economic development of the region and that linkages with the Forum by the Tourism Council of the South Pacific (TCSP) were important to ensure regional tourism development proposals were coordinated closely with other priorities. The Forum recognised the TCSP as a regional intergovernmental organisation and agreed that it should have a reporting relationship with the Forum.

POST-FORUM DIALOGUE

42. The Forum endorsed the value of the Post-Forum Dialogue as an important opportunity to exchange views on international and regional issues with the main external powers with interests in the South Pacific. It adopted procedural changes designed to encourage participation in the Dialogue at a high level, and to enable the Dialogue to address fully the global and regional policy issues of mutual concern of Forum countries with the Dialogue Partners.

43. The Forum decided that there should be no change to existing criteria for Post-Forum Dialogue Partners, or to the current list of Partners. It directed the Secretariat to examine the possibility of a separate meeting for exchange of views with representatives of Taiwan/Republic of China.

OBSERVER STATUS AT FORUM MEETINGS

44. The Forum decided that there should be no change to existing criteria for observer status. It noted that the Secretary General was clarifying with the Governments of the Republic of Palau and French Polynesia their interest in observer status at the Forum.

DONOR SUPPORT FOR FORUM PROGRAMMES

45. The Forum welcomed the strong support provided by a wide range of donors to the programmes being implemented by the Forum Secretariat. In particular it recognised the contributions now being made by non-member countries and organisations. It further indicated that it supported the use of regional organisations as implementing agents for a number of regional programmes such as those funded under the UNDP Fifth Cycle Regional Programme.

REPORTS OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

46. The Forum received and adopted annual reports of:

(1) Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency
(2) Director of the Pacific Islands Development Program
(3) Director of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
(4) Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific
(5) Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat
(6) Director of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY GENERAL

47. The Forum appointed the Hon Ieremia Tabai, GCMG, of Kiribati as the new Secretary General for the Forum Secretariat.

OUTGOING SECRETARY GENERAL

48. The Forum acclaimed the invaluable contributions and historic achievements of the outgoing Secretary General, the Hon Henry Naisali, who in his six years in office had presided over the development of the Forum

Secretariat into the highly professional body it was today. Forum Leaders wished him long life, happiness and success in his future endeavours.

SOPAC

49 The Forum supported the application of Mr Philipp Muller and strongly supported his appointment as the new Director of SOPAC. It expressed appreciation for the services and contributions of Mr Philipp Muller, the outgoing Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency and Mr Jioji Kotobalavu, the outgoing Director of SOPAC.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

50. The Forum accepted with appreciation the kind offer of Solomon Islands Government to host the 23rd South Pacific Forum and Nauru to host the 24th South Pacific Forum. The Forum agreed that it was desirable that the hosting of the Forum should revert thereafter to the practice of proceeding in alphabetical order, commencing with Australia, subject to the Forum determining that special circumstances (e.g. Papua New Guinea's 20th Anniversary in 1995) warranted a variation.